



"Healthy People 2000: National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives for the Nation," (1) defined goals and objectives for improving the health of Americans by the end of the century.

During the past year, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) took steps to develop statistical support for Healthy People 2000 objectives by revitalizing training programs for State and local health professionals, issuing new publications to highlight statistical activities and methodological developments, and coordinating activities to provide consensus indicators and common analytical approaches.

During 1991, NCHS worked to increase the availability of minority health data, expanded health care surveys into new settings, and fielded a nationwide survey on health promotion and disease prevention.

Statistical Support for Objectives

"Healthy People 2000" sets out 22 priority areas with 300 specific objectives. Priority Area 22, Surveillance and Data Systems, describes the range of data and the capacity needed at the national, State, and local levels to evaluate progress in reaching the goals and to measure the success of intervention strategies.

A first step is identifying a set of health status indicators (Objective 22.1) for use at all levels of government. NCHS convened a group of public health professionals (Committee 22.1) to develop a consensus set of indicators. The Committee adopted a group of desired characteristics and selection criteria for the indicators. A list of 50 potential indicators was narrowed to a final set of 18 that was released by Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in July 1991. The indicators include measures of health status and risk factors. Some of the measures of health status are mortality from motor vehicle crashes and cardiovascular disease and the incidence of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Some of the risk factors are births to adolescents and childhood poverty. In the aggregate, the indicators present an overview of a community's health.

CDC encourages States and localities to adopt the indicators in public health practice and to consider them in the development of new or modified data systems. NCHS is working with representatives of the Association of Vital Records and Health Statistics on the development of computer software programs to track the health status indicators and key objectives at the State level. The indicators are viewed as an initial set. As public health priorities change and other data sets become available, the list will be modified through similar consensus processes.

In the coming months, CDC is to implement processes to identify significant data gaps and to develop and implement common data collection methodologies, as called for in Objective 22.3.

About half of the data to monitor the Healthy People 2000 objectives at the national level will come from the data systems maintained by NCHS, including the 1991 National Health Interview Survey, with its extensive component on health promotion and disease prevention. Other CDC components, other government agencies, and private sector sources will provide data. An inventory of these data sources is now being compiled.

NCHS initiated several efforts this year to work with State and local public health staff to enhance statistical support for Healthy People 2000 at the community level. NCHS revitalized its Applied Statistics Training Institute, which offers short programs of instruction to State and local public health staff members engaged in community health assessments. Beginning in early 1992, eight courses will be offered in different locations around the country, with faculty recruited from State and local health agencies and from universities.

NCHS has produced the first issues in a new publication series for vital statistics activities of State and local health departments. "Healthy People 2000: Statistics and Surveillance" (2) includes articles on national efforts to monitor surveillance activities related to the objectives. The series provides announcements of publications, meetings, and other events. A companion publication, "Healthy People 2000: Statistical Notes," presents articles on

methodological issues related to monitoring Healthy People 2000 objectives. The first issue of the Notes covers the consensus indicators (3). Both publications are produced by NCHS with input from other CDC programs and from State and local health agencies. The publications are available to those involved in implementing Healthy People 2000 programs or in developing data for health promotion and disease prevention goals.

To coordinate Healthy People 2000 statistical activities at the national level, as well as to provide a focal point for State and local support, NCHS is developing the organizational structure for its Healthy People 2000 staff. More information on Healthy People 2000 data activities and how to receive or contribute to the newsletter is available from NCHS, Healthy People 2000 Staff, Room 630, 6525 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, MD 20782.

Minority Health Data

The Disadvantaged Minority Health Improvement Act of 1990 authorizes NCHS to increase the availability of data on minority health issues. During the past year, NCHS awarded its first cooperative agreements for the development of new methods for acquiring and analyzing statistics on the health of racial and ethnic populations through developmental projects with the National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Service Organizations and the Asian American Health Forum. In addition to direct support of research by these organizations, the cooperative agreements will provide support to community based minority researchers for methodological and analytic projects.

An agreement with the American Indian Health Care Association calls for an assessment of existing data resources and a strategy and network to address data needs. Under an agreement with the Minority Health Professions Foundation, a clearinghouse on health data and data needs has been established. Researchers exploring comparisons between blacks and whites and differentials in health status are expected to use the clearinghouse resources. Another project brings the minority health data needs

into focus with Healthy People 2000 objectives. NCHS is to provide support through the Public Health Foundation to award contracts to five State centers for health statistics to analyze unique data sources on minority health and Healthy People 2000 health status indicators. This approach builds on and strengthens statistical expertise and support for health assessment at the State level.

NCHS has begun activities specifically to increase the availability of minority health data collected in its own surveys. Currently, there are plans to oversample Hispanics and include an expanded list of nine Asian and Pacific Islander subpopulations in the racial and ethnic categories listed on the National Health Interview Survey, beginning in 1992. With regard to vital statistics, NCHS has encouraged eight States to improve the level of detail they obtain on subpopulations of Asian and Pacific Islanders through the Vital Statistics Cooperative System.

Data Systems Developments

The National Health Care Survey moved closer to the goal of monitoring the utilization of health care throughout the array of care settings by fielding the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey in 1991. This component covers emergency and outpatient departments where many Americans receive their regular medical care. The National Home and Hospice Care Survey was pretested in 1991 for a full-scale survey in 1992. With the aging of the U.S. population, this survey is expected to provide essential information to plan needed health and social services. The National Health Provider Inventory was sent to the field in the spring of 1991 and is nearing completion. It will produce the first comprehensive listing of a wide spectrum of health facilities.

The Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey is now in the second half of its 6-year cycle. Data from the first phase will be processed and analyzed to provide extensive data on the health of children, including immunizations, blood lead levels, measles, cholesterol, and blood pressure.

Other areas receiving special attention in the survey are the health of older Americans, occupational health, and environmental health. The first release of data is expected in about a year.

The National Health Interview Survey conducted a comprehensive survey of health promotion and disease prevention in 1990 and 1991. The 1990 survey is expected to provide the final assessment of progress in reaching many of the 1990 health objectives for the nation. The 1991 survey findings will provide baseline data to measure change as programs to reach Healthy People 2000 goals are implemented.

In the area of vital statistics, NCHS received and is analyzing the first data from new birth and death certificates implemented in most States throughout the system in 1989. The new certificates greatly expand the data available. Other activities focused on improving cause of death reporting on the death certificate. In cooperation with the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics and other organizations, NCHS developed an educational exhibit, held a second workshop on this topic, supported an evaluation project, and is developing a continuing education module directed to physicians.

Data Dissemination

Two widely used NCHS data sources have been made available in personal computer diskette form. They are "Health, United States, 1990," with tables in Lotus 1-2-3 worksheet files, to aid users in data analysis and retrieval, and the 1989 National Hospital Discharge Survey on Diskettes.

CD-ROM became a method of data release in 1991 with the development of NCHS' first ROM, the 1987 National Health Interview Survey. With its search system, called Statistical Export and Tabulation System (SETS), the CD-ROM offers users easy access to survey data on use of medical services, extent of acute and chronic illness, cancer risk factors and screening, adoption, polio, and other data. This CD-ROM is to be followed in early 1992 by the 1988 National Health In-

terview Survey and the CD-ROM containing the 1987 multiple cause of death data from the NCHS National Vital Statistics System.

A publication on electronic products available from NCHS (4) lists and describes the new public use data files, which include the 1989 current health topics from the National Health Interview Survey. Data tapes are now available on adult immunization, AIDS knowledge and attitudes, dental health, digestive disorders, health care coverage, mental health, and orofacial pain.

The 1990 Catalog of Publications from the National Center for Health Statistics (5) indexes and provides ordering information for all of the NCHS series and individual publications released each year. Information on the electronic data products update, publications catalog, and other publications or data products, and how to receive them, is available from NCHS, Scientific and Technical Information Branch, 6525 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, MD 20782.

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